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Yonkers Green Policy Task Force News Blast

November 5, 2009

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BREAKING NEWS!



A bottle of water will run you an extra five cents now that New York State has imposed its new tax.

With more than 3.2 billion water bottles sold throughout New York State each year, the law expands

the current bottle deposit program reach to more than 90 percent of the beverage market.

That's good news for the state as it expects to raise \$100 million in annual revenues from the deposits on unreturned bottles.

The GPTF reminds you to remove the tops before recycling or returning for deposits.

How Green is Your Town?

The new question on everyone's mind lately seems to have shifted from which uber- sized stainless steel appliance to showcase in their newly renovated gourmet kitchen (even though they have no clue how to operate the thing) to how responsible their town is toward the environment.

More and more people are questioning whether officials are considering switching to alternative fuel vehicles? What percentage of homes are recycling and how can that be increased? What municipalities have stormwater management on their radar and what is their plan?

You can find out!



Pace University has put together an intensive half-day workshop for municipal and educational decision makers to scrutinize the programs, policies and practices of towns, school systems and business communities in Westchester County.

How will **YOURS** measure up?

Come Thursday, November 12 to the Wainwright House in Rye, NY to find out what your town or school can do about energy audits, alternative energy, green procurement, indoor air quality, pesticide alternatives, storm water mitigation and alternative energy.

SCHOOL TRACK: Nov. 12 from 9 a.m. to Noon

MUNICIPAL TRACK: Nov. 12 from 1p.m. to 4 p.m.

Please RSVP by email to Ellen Weininger at ellen@grassrootsinfo.org

Popping the Question: Real Man on the Street Interviews



The environmental question of the week is... **"What could Yonkers do to become more environmental?"**

"It's hard for a city of this size, I think, to do a lot of things and get people as involved as those in smaller towns," said one woman who did not want her name printed. "But I would say to keep trying!"

It takes a village, Lady. It takes a village.

"People need to stop throwing their %@&* on the ground," said a guy named

Malcolm coming out of C.H. Martin's. "I mean there's a garbage can right in front of you and you just toss the garbage? That's just really wrong. But you can't say nothing to them. The city should work on this, stopping pollution. Maybe give tickets to them."

We thanked Malcolm before spotting a kind looking elderly woman across the street in front of the Galaxy Diner.

"Excuse me, Ma'am," we said. "I work for the City of Yonkers Green Policy Task Force and wanted to ask what you think Yonkers should do to reduce its carbon footprint?"

"I keep hearing more and more about the environment but I really don't know how to answer this question. I know my building has recycling and I make sure to do it. Once you get used to it, it's not hard, even for me at my age," said Mary Walker.

We love Mrs. Walker and wish we could clone her.

"All I know is you gotta make whatever it is free cuz people don't want to pay no more money for anything, even for something important like what Al Gore said," answered JJ, who then took a big bite of his Snickers candy bar, letting the wrapper fall on the street. "Ya know? People need incentive. They gotta want to."

Perhaps JJ should apply to be a street sweeper with Malcolm as his supervisor?

Computers Need Sleep Too!

Do you leave your TV on all day and night because you think turning it off is bad for the tubes? Of course not. Then why do people leave their computers on all day?

Gone are the days when hard disks did not automatically park their heads when shut off and frequent on-off cycling could damage such hard disks. Now it's actually **not good** for your computer to leave it on all day.

Not only that, but it is 10 times more energy efficient to turn it off for the night rather than put it to sleep. Michelle Franci, a chemistry professor at Bryn Mawr College, did the calculations.

"Powering up my machine takes three minutes at full tilt. At 120 watts, this uses up about 22 kJ of energy. If I left it in sleep mode all night (at 3.5 watts), it uses 228 kJ. I save about 200 kJ of energy if I shut it off for the night, rather than just put it to sleep. It comes to about 44 pounds of carbon dioxide a year," she reported.

That's also not mentioning a savings of about \$220 a year in electricity costs.

Vine Killers Wanted!



Looking for a charitable family activity over this holiday season?

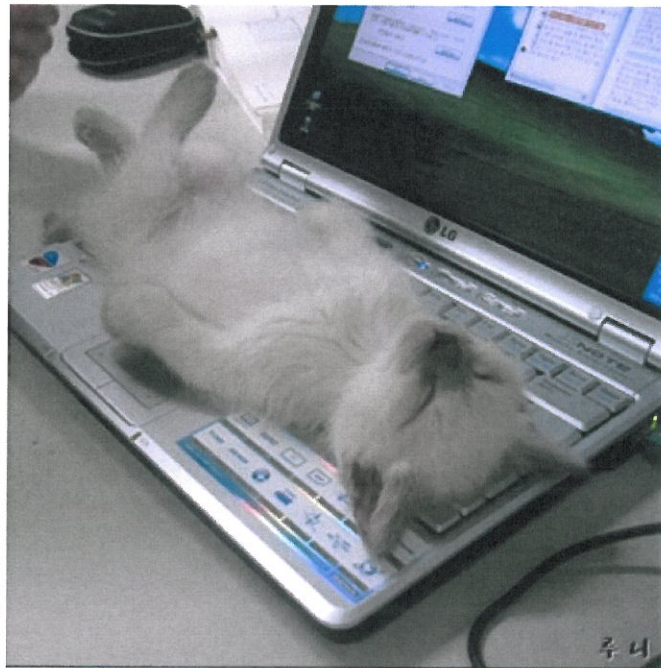
The GPTF says look no further than [Ground work Hudson Valley's](#) Free-a-Tree program. It calls for hearty volunteers to commit "vineacide" by hunting the woods for Oriental Bittersweet and Porcelain Berry, two invasive vines that deserve everything that's coming to them for crowding out native plants, stealing their water, strangling trees, and blocking sunlight to under-story plants. The result devastates wildlife by making it harder for them to find food and nesting sites.

The GPTF encourages readers to gather their troops on any of the dates listed below. Make them rise and shine and give them a big bowl of Wheaties before sending them into the woods packin' a mean set of clippers or loppers and a pair of gloves. (If you don't have these handy, spares will be on site.) Wear warm clothes, long sleeve shirts and sturdy shoes (no flip flops). Children under age 16 require adult supervision. Community Service credits are available for high school students.

DATES: Note that all Free-A-Tree events run from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 21

Rain Date: Sunday, November 22



Sunday, December 6

Rain Date: Sunday, December 13

Saturday, January 9

Rain Date: Saturday, January 16

DIRECTIONS: Exit 13 (Farragut Ave.) off the Saw Mill River Parkway (going North). Meet in the parking lot right off the exit.

From Saw Mill River Parkway going SOUTH, exit 11, Tompkins Avenue-go left to Saw Mill River Rd., turn left. Go to Farragut Ave. and turn left, then turn left into the parking lot. Access also from Saw Mill River Road (Ardsley side).

Refreshments will be provided.

The GPTF has inside scoop on the food... fresh donuts and coffee!

For more information, call Groundwork Hudson Valley at 914-375-2151.

The Answer Is...



Here's a fun little multiple choice question. If you were on the **GPTF**, which meeting would you have wanted to attend with our coordinator last week?

compelling hour in their days.

1. A meeting with every school custodian (about 50) in Yonkers to hear the **GPTF** and the Yonkers DPW review and reiterate the County's Source Separation Law and discuss specifics regarding recycling rules and regulations. The meeting included a Powerpoint presentation and a Q&A. A **GPTF** member kindly brought the guys coffee which they greatly appreciated and greatly needed to stay awake for this

2. A rainy day outdoor tour/workshop of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture's large scale composting facilities complete with stepping in mucky mud by the pig pens while wearing heeled boots and no raincoat. The tour also included an up close and personal view of the chicken processing residuals which are also composted, along with thousands of pounds of rotting kitchen scraps.

3. An intense number crunching meeting with the Board of Education to update the Environmental Protection Agency in our quarterly report on a \$300,000 grant to put pollution control devices on Yonkers school buses and to roll out our anti-idling awareness day at all Yonkers Public Schools.

4. A night class on how to feed and care for your own compost worms in an effort to reduce landfill waste and the resulting methane gas. This was hands on, as students "built" their own containers and adopted their own one pound bag of red wigglers.

Feel free to cast your vote for the next eblast by clicking [here](#).

Photo: [Greg Twehues](#), Director of Nutrient Management of Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture running the compost workshop.

Photo credit: M.J. Wilson.

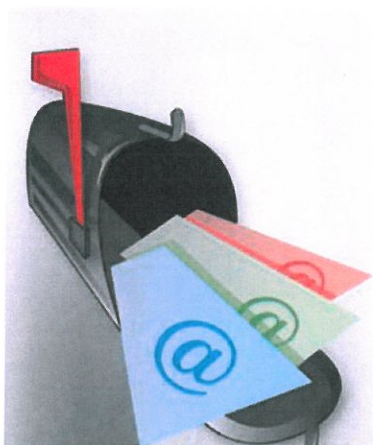
Great Website

The GPTF recommends [this great website](#) for environmentally-conscious "Do It Yourselfers" who want plans, tools and information to do renewable energy and conservation projects at home.

Hundreds of projects are listed, from changing a light bulb to building a solar home. There's also design information and tools for building renewable energy projects and an experimental section for backyard inventors. (Weather balloons not covered.)



Reader Email



Here's an email from a Faithful Reader:

Hi there:

"Can the GPTF tell me if there are opportunities for my two teenage boys to get their hands dirty doing an environmentally-friendly project in Westchester? They are 12 and 14. We love Beczak and the Science Barge already but want to get them out in the woods or on a hiking trail. Any ideas?"

Dear Reader: Your timing is perfect. See story above on invasive plant removal and vinecutting with Groundwork Hudson Valley.

This eblast is provided by the [City of Yonkers Green Policy Task Force](#). Its members research and submit potential "green" legislative initiatives to the City Council; work on potential quality-of-life improvements for the Yonkers community; apply for environmental grants; and foster educational outreach for Yonkers students as well as the community-at-large. Their public meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. on the 4th floor of City Hall.

If you know of others in the environmental community who would like to receive this news or attend meetings, please email laura.fahrenheit@yonkersny.gov

From: Council President Chuck Lesnick with Chairman Bob Walters and Coordinator Laura Fahrenheit; District 1 Councilmember Pat McDow with Margaret Setterholm; District 2 Majority Leader Sandy Annabi with Nortrud Spero; District 3 Councilmember Joan Gronowski with Loretta Miraglia; District 4 Minority Leader Liam J. McLaughlin with Terry Joshi; District 5 Councilmember John Murtagh with Molly Roffman; District 6 Councilmember Dee Barbato with Mel Goldstein; Administration's Appointee Joe D'Lando.

Written by Laura Fahrenthold

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